

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING FIREFIGHTER ROGER MILLER

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Roger Miller for his 40 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Miller has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

CONDEMNING THE HORRIFIC SHOOTINGS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA ON MARCH 16, 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Homeland Security, and Terrorism, and a senior member of the Homeland Security, and Budget Committees, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 275—Condemning the horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021, and reaffirming the House of Representative's commitment to combating hate, bigotry, and violence against the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community.

Madam Speaker, we all awoke earlier this year to the horrific news that in suburban Atlanta, Georgia, a 21-year old angry white man murdered 8 persons at three Asian massage spas.

Among the innocent victims were 6 young Asian American women who worked in the establishments.

The suspected perpetrator of these brutal crimes has been arrested and charged with 8 counts of murder.

According to the Atlanta Police Department, the killer is reported to have told police that he

has an issue, what he considers a 'sex addiction,' and 'sees these [Asian massage spa] locations as something that allows him to go to these places' and 'it is a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate.'

Adding insult to injury, a Georgia sheriff's captain, acting as spokesperson for law enforcement investigators, characterized the killer as "having a really bad day."

Madam Speaker, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there has been a significant increase in harassment and violence against the Asian American community.

Unfortunately, this is not new; there is a long history of racism against Asian Americans, especially during times of social and economic unrest.

Throughout American history Asian Americans are often blamed for the emergence of pandemics and diseases, even if the sickness originated far outside the Asian American community.

The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception, as American citizens, and residents of actual or perceived Chinese descent, have received intense and unjust scrutiny, violence, and harassment as perpetrators associate them with the cause of the pandemic and resulting social and economic turmoil.

And the racist practice of the 45th President of always referring to the coronavirus as the "China Virus," or "Kung Flu" certainly contributed to, and inflamed, an already dangerous climate for persons of Asian descent.

Asian migration to the continental United States can be traced as far back as 1800's.

Despite their long residence in the country, throughout American history Asian American communities have been stigmatized as perpetual foreigners.

These xenophobic sentiments are especially exacerbated in times of social and economic discontent, leaving Asian American communities vulnerable to white supremacist and racist violence and harassment.

Especially notable to today, historically anti-Asian racism often associates Asian communities with illness—leaving Asian Americans particularly vulnerable to medical scapegoating and violence during epidemics.

Xenophobia and racism against the Asian American community continued well into the 20th century.

Most infamously, in 1942 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ordered the forced internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

While American immigration policies' still forbade the free migration of Asian immigrants into the country, thousands of Japanese-Americans had lived in the United States for decades, many of whom were second and third-generation Americans.

As the 1980 investigation and report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would later conclude, Japanese internment was primarily driven by racism and xenophobia rather than a legitimate security threat.

Even though nearly two-thirds of Japanese internees were American citizens, Japanese-Americans were considered as a collective to be disloyal, un-American, and a security risk.

In 1982, amid a downturn in the U.S. automobile industry that was blamed on competition from Japanese companies, Chinese American Vincent Chin was beaten to death by two white autoworkers, one allegedly saying, "it's because of you little m-f-s that we're out of work."

Chin's assailants never spent a day in jail and instead were only sentenced to probation and fined and the resulting outrage from the Asian American community served as a galvanizing force to organize for Asian American civil rights and advocacy, and it remains a central rallying cry and example of injustice for contemporary Asian American activism.

In the aftermath of the September 11th attack on the United States, South Asian, Muslim, and Middle Eastern Americans increasingly became the targets of violence and discrimination.

In the week following the terrorist attack, media outlets reported 645 bias incidents targeting people perceived to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent.

At the time, the Bush Administration condemned the harassment and urged respect for the Muslim and South Asian community, with President Bush himself stating that the perpetrators of these racialized attacks should be "ashamed."

Then-Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Robert Mueller reiterated President Bush's sentiments, stating that: "vigilante attacks and threats against Arab-Americans will not be tolerated."

In the years since, the Department of Justice has investigated over 800 incidents of violence, threats, and harassment against Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian Americans, and others of perceived Middle Eastern descent.

Sparked by xenophobic rhetoric framing fault for the coronavirus around its country of origin, Asian Americans, notably those of Chinese descent or assumed Chinese descent, have suffered increased rates of violence, harassment, and intimidation over the last year.

Led by the racist rhetoric of the 45th President, targeted xenophobic and anti-Asian sentiments have exacerbated the scapegoating and targeting of the Asian American community.

Between March 16 and March 30, 2020, the worst president in history referred to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" more than 20 times, claiming that his phrasing was not racist at all, but rather accurate because the virus came from China.

He even had the word "Corona" crossed out of his press conference notes, replaced with "Chinese" handwritten above it, and he also called the virus "Kung Flu" at a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 20, 2020 then again at a church rally in Phoenix, Arizona on June 24, 2020.

Examples of additional violent physical assaults against the Asian American community over the last year include:

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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